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Executive Registry

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

SUBJECT: Political Intelligence Around the World

1. This book is responsive to the questions frequently raised about the status of political intelligence. It is in effect a candid report card on the nature of coverage we have around the world. The first tab is a summary of the attachments that follow. The summary includes maps and depict the state of our coverage.
2. It is important to bear in mind that what is being talked about here is basically collection. It is equally important to know that CIA provides only a portion of our total collection. The primary responsibility for reporting on the political scene and prospects in a given country is that of the U.S. Embassy, particularly the State Department representatives therein. CIA efforts to go front and center in reporting on political developments in given countries is often neither welcome nor appropriate. Any evaluation of political intelligence collection abroad must include the entire spectrum of collectors abroad including State, Defense, Treasury, and others as well as CIA.
3. But there is a deeper problem in all this and I do not believe that this paper as it now stands addresses it. The problem is: How good are our political analysts? Some are better than others. Wrapped up in this question are questions relating to analytical techniques and methods and about what can be done to insure that our finished intelligence publications include timely reporting on a variety of political scenes. In short, we may have a wealth of information residing in the heads of some of our political analysts who are not invited to publish their views as frequently as might be desirable.
4. One question that originated this study and I believe it was from the President was: Does CIA tend to do more of its collection where it is easy to collect and less of it where it is hard? These papers do not fully address that question. Bear in mind, however, that for the last several years, our stations have been told to fix their priorities on the recruitment of hard sources and not on covering the local scene. The stations are reminded, however, that they must keep an eye on the local scene, particularly to be in a position to report fully in times of crisis. Any change in this priority would impact on our hard source recruitment efforts and would have to be the subject of interagency agreement that CIA is now expected to be more deeply involved in political collection and assessment in U.S. missions abroad.

Attachment

E. H. Knoche

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